

REMARKS

The Examiner has rejected claims 1, 2, 5 and 12-14. Claims 3, 4, 6, 8-10 and 16 are allowed. By this amendment, claims 1 and 12 have been amended, no claims have been cancelled, and new claims 17 and 18 have been added. As a result, claims 1-6, 8-10, 12-14 and 16-18 remain pending in this application. No new matter has been added.

Interview Summary

The undersigned and Examiner Joyce conducted an interview by telephone on March 23, 2011. The undersigned did not submit to the Examiner a set of proposed claims prior to the interview.

In the interview, the undersigned discussed claim 12 as pending and proposed an amendment to claim 12 so that the limitation of “each sphere of one matrix contiguous with a plurality of spheres of the other matrix” be amended to read “each sphere of one matrix in contact with a plurality of spheres of the other matrix” (emphasis added). Examiner Joyce agreed that the Figures of US 5,863,132 to Smith do not teach the limitation as amended. However, Examiner Joyce indicated further study of Smith would be required, as well as possibly a new search.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. 102(b)

Claims 1 and 12 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as anticipated by Smith. Applicant respectfully submits that claim 12 is patentable over the above cited reference, as features of the claim are not taught by or rendered obvious in view of the applied reference, either independently or in combination with other art of record. For example, amended claim 12 recites a bearing including a frame surrounding two matrices, each matrix with a plurality of spheres. In the bearing shown in Figures 2 and 3, the upper spheres 10 of the first matrix 12 contact a plurality of lower spheres 14 of the second matrix 16. In this exemplary arrangement, a single upper sphere 10 is shown in contact with four lower spheres 14 (see Figure 3). In clear contrast, Smith teaches positioning a single sphere of an upper level in a co-axial and stacked relationship with a single sphere of a lower level. Figures 1-4 of Smith all show an upper roller

element 12 positioned above and in contact with a lower roller element 14. The force vector 1 is illustrated along a common centerline of the elements 12, 14. No other roller element is described or illustrated in contact with the upper roller element 12. In fact, the use of retainers 20, 21 teaches away from one single sphere contacting more than one other single sphere. For at least this reason, claim 12 is patentable over the prior art of record and is believed to be in condition for allowance. Claim 1 is also believed to be in condition for allowance for at least the same reason. Therefore, reconsideration of this rejection is requested.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. 103(a)

Claims 2, 5, 13 and 14 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Smith. Claims 2 and 5 are patentable at least based on direct or indirect dependence on claim 1 and are condition for allowance. Claims 13 and 14 are patentable at least based on direct or indirect dependence on claim 12 and are condition for allowance. Therefore, reconsideration of this rejection is requested.

New Claims

Claim 17 depending from claim 1 and claim 18 depending from claim 12 have been added. Each claim includes the feature of each sphere of one matrix in contact with four spheres of the other matrix. This feature is illustrated in Figure 3. This feature is neither taught nor suggested in the prior art of record. Therefore, claims 17 and 18 are in condition for allowance. Further, claims 17 and 18 are patentable at least based on dependence on claims 1 and 12, respectively, and are condition for allowance.

Conclusion

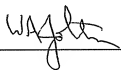
In summary, independent claims 1 and 12 are believed to be allowable. Claims 3-4, 6, 8-10 and 16 were previously allowed. The remaining pending dependent claims are allowable at least based on direct or indirect dependence from claims 1 and 12.

In view of the above amendments and remarks, it is respectfully submitted that all pending claims of this application are in condition for allowance. Accordingly, a Notice of Allowance for all pending claims of this application is respectfully solicited. Furthermore, if the

Examiner believes that additional discussions or information might advance the prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the below-listed telephone number.

Respectfully submitted,

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